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NATIONAL STANDARDIZATION: TREATMENT OF NAMES IN MULTILINGUAL AREAS

Toponymy and translation: the problems and solutions proposed by CUENGO

Document presented by Canada**

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The Translation Bureau (Department of the Secretary of State) of the Canadian Government established the Committee on the Standardization of the Writing of Official Geographical Names in Canada (CUENGO) so as to standardize the linguistic treatment of geographical names in running text and to bring it in line with the policy applied in federal map-making. CUENGO has taken stock of the difficulties caused by the use of English-language place-names in French-language texts, whether translations or originals. It has drawn up a series of guidelines for the translation of the generic term, the treatment of the specific term and the means of linking the translated generic to the specific and the translated generic to the non-translated specific. In addition, CUENGO has made a number of recommendations essentially intended to improve the use and knowledge of official geographical names within the public service. Among the measures taken up to now have been: the dissemination of the CUENGO guidelines; the initiation of a project by the Terminology and Linguistic Services Division of the Department of the Secretary of State to produce for each province a list of problematic place-names and the proposed equivalents; the creation of a centre of expertise at the Terminology and Linguistic Services Division that would attempt to solve problems encountered in the use of geographical names within the Department's Training and Development Programme.